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ABSTRACT

A study of compensatory education programs in written composition was conducted in ten Florida public community colleges during the winter and spring of 1970. A major purpose of the study was to establish a data base from which a model could be developed that might improve the effectiveness of these programs. The existing programs at the colleges are described in terms of types of programs offered, criteria for placement of students in remedial courses, course content, and instructional techniques used. Recommendations (including goals and purposes, suggested objectives, content, instructional theory, and evaluation) for remedial written English composition programs designed for disadvantaged students are presented and discussed in the remainder of the report. (MB)

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IMPLEMENTING THE OPEN DOOR: COMPENSATORY EDUCATION IN FLORIDA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

PHASE II: ENGLISH COMPOSITION

By

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September, 1970

JC 700 219

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
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FOREWORD

The growth in enrollment figures for community colleges during the past fifteen years are one indication of a move toward universal higher education. Since 1955, the Florida system of community colleges has grown from one which served 4,000 students in five colleges to a system which in the fall of 1969 served more than 120,000 students in twenty-seven public community colleges.

With emphasis upon keeping an open door to all those who desire further education, the community colleges serve students who represent a range of intellectual abilities as broad as those found in society itself. In attempting to meet the educational needs of those at the lower end of this range a number of problems are encountered. Among the solutions tried by Florida's community colleges have been the development of remedial directed studies, guided studies, or compensatory education programs. These programs have been offered in a number of areas: reading, English, math, the social sciences, natural science and speech, to name a few. The courses in these programs have stressed small classes and individualized instruction.

The IRC, in assigning a study of compensatory education as one of its top priority projects feels that it is important to discover what is being offered in these programs, how they are being conducted, and how worthwhile these activities may be for the colleges, the communities, and the students themselves.

This paper focuses upon one aspect of the compensatory education study. It is based upon a study of compensatory education programs in "written composition" and was conducted in selected Florida community colleges during the winter

and spring of 1970. A major goal of the study was to establish a data base upon which a model could be recommended for such programs which might improve their effectiveness. Two major problems comprised in the focus of the study were: (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of written English composition courses in remedial programs for disadvantaged students in Florida's community colleges; and (2) to recommend a model which might improve their effectiveness.

We are indebted to Jane Stevenson for her work in this study. She visited ten community colleges to talk with faculty in collecting the data which are discussed herein. This study is the second in a series which focuses upon compensatory education in Florida's community colleges.*

Michael I. Schafer
Associate Director

* *Implementing the Open Door: Compensatory Education in Florida's Community Colleges, Phase I: Questionnaire Analyses.* The Florida Community Junior College Inter-institutional Research Council, September, 1970.

COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES: THEIR GROWTH AND FUNCTIONS

The growth of the community junior college has been one of the great phenomena of higher education since World War II. This growth is related to the many social and economic processes forcing change in American life: the great technological development, and the change in the labor force which this has brought about; metropolitan development and the urbanization of the population; social integration caused by urbanization. The decrease in both the numbers and kinds of jobs for unskilled laborers and the increase in the demand for workers with some skills has made it necessary to keep students in school longer. During the last decade, society and the schools have been persuading students that everyone must have a college education. The answer to this demand for higher education for everyone has been the community junior college with its low tuition (if any), nonselective admissions, and geographic and social accessibility.

The community junior college has many functions. Havighurst gives four social functions: the *opportunity* function of providing higher education for all; the *efficiency* function of providing higher education at a minimum expense to the individual and to the public; the *citizenship* function of stimulating intellectual growth and civic responsibility and opening channels among various groups of society; and the *manpower* function of providing trained employees for local business and industry. (17) American democracy has emphasized the responsibility of public education to educate the citizenry to carry on the free institutions of society, and from this concept comes the concomitant principle that equality of educational opportunity must be provided. A second responsibility of public education is to provide

the opportunity for each citizen to develop his individual capacities to the fullest possible extent.

The *open-door* policy of the community junior colleges has grown out of the acceptance of these two responsibilities. It is interpreted by the proponents and administrators of the community junior colleges as being a nonselective admissions system. According to this policy, the colleges are open to any high school graduate or any other person of maturity who is capable of profiting from the instruction offered. In many colleges the open-door policy is extended to include an unrestricted choice in areas of study.

Characteristics of Community Junior College Students in Florida

This policy has brought to the community junior colleges large numbers of students who would not have presented themselves to institutions of higher education under other circumstances. They are, for the most part, representative of the communities from which they come. In his study of San Jose College, Clark found that the student body reflected the occupational, economic, and social structure of the community. This is not surprising, for the students gave as their prime reason for attending the college that it was near their homes. However, although the full range of the socioeconomic structure of the community is represented in the community junior college, the largest number of the students are concentrated in the lower end of that range. (9)

Although the junior colleges also have students from the whole range of academic ability, there are more of them in the lower ranges than there are in four-year colleges and universities. Using *Project Talent* data, Cooley and Becker found that one-third of the community college students were below the four-year college means

on selected aptitude measures. In fact, they found that the junior college students are more like their nonacademic peers than like those in the four-year colleges and universities. (13) Clark found not only a low college aptitude but also low scholastic achievement among community college students.

The level of education of the parents and the occupation of the father (or the income of the family, as this reflects parental education) are the two most powerful predictors of academic success. Students who come from low-income families (especially if there is a long-term pattern of low income) and from families in which they are the first generation to attend college have greater difficulty attaining success in school. If they are also members of a minority group and live in a slum, ghetto, or poor rural area, the prognosis for success is even poorer.

A thorough understanding of the socioeconomic and academic background of the student population is essential to curriculum planning in the community junior college. It is obvious that if the colleges simply duplicate the offerings of the senior institutions (transfer programs) they will not serve the large number of students who are not yet prepared for these courses, and the open-door policy will in reality become the "revolving door" policy, which the statistics on holding-power in the junior colleges suggest.

In this survey of written English composition courses in remedial programs for disadvantaged students in Florida community colleges, ten colleges were chosen to represent, as carefully as possible, the wide diversity of Florida. Every geographical section is represented. The colleges serve different areas with greatly different population patterns: urban groups, suburban groups, and rural groups. A wide variety of economic and occupational interests is also represented. In order to discover the characteristics of the students attending these colleges, the *Junior*

College Questionnaire which is part of the *Survey of Characteristics of College Students, Entering Freshmen and Transfer Undergraduates*, conducted by the Board of Regents of the State University System of Florida, was analyzed. The information included in the survey is based on the 1969-1970 entering class of freshmen and was obtained through the cooperation of the Board of Regents.

Approximately 30 percent of the entering students come from families with an annual income below $7,000 yearly (see Table I), with a high of 47.8 percent reported at one college and a low of 23.1 percent at another. Of the fathers of these students, an average of 27.5 percent did not finish high school, with a high of 48.2 percent at one college and a low of 22.3 percent at another. An average of 26.5 percent of the mothers did not finish high school, one college reporting 38.8 percent as a high and another 20.1 percent as a low.

In spite of these figures showing a relatively low level of education of parents and a low level of family income which have been accepted as indicating a poor prognosis for academic success, 70 to 90 percent of the students indicate that they "expect" to continue their education in senior universities; a high of 92.1 percent was reported at one college and a low of 71.6 percent at another. And even more startling figures show that from 60 to 80 percent of them were actually enrolled in transfer programs at the time they answered the questionnaire--79.1 percent in one college as a high, and 61.6 percent in another as a low.

Many questions are raised by these figures. The first is that of the counseling given, both in the high schools and in the junior colleges. It is clear that many of the students do not have a realistic appraisal of their own abilities, interests, and motivational strength. Many of them do not comprehend with any clarity the demands

TABLE I

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS AND STUDENT EXPECTATION
OF STUDENTS IN TEN FLORIDA COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

College	Percent of Fathers not High School Graduates	Percent of Mothers not High School Graduates	Percent of Families with Incomes below $7,000	Percent of Students in Transfer Programs	Percent of Students Expecting to Attend Senior Universities
A	35.4	29.6	33.2	66.8	82.8
B	26.4	24.2	26.5	70.8	84.8
C	42.3	31.8	38.9	58.0	74.8
D	28.2	26.1	30.5	69.7	82.5
E	27.4	25.6	29.5	74.6	91.4
F	23.9	20.6	34.8	72.0	71.6
G	32.7	31.5	35.4	73.9	88.8
H	48.2	38.8	47.9	79.4	92.1
I	22.3	20.1	29.5	59.1	80.6
J	23.2	20.3	23.1	61.6	84.2

SOURCE: Board of Regents of the State University System of Florida. *Survey of Characteristics of College Students, Entering Freshmen and Transfer Undergraduates. Junior College Questionnaire.* 1969-1970.

of higher education, nor do they have adequate knowledge about career opportunities--neither those which require upper division training nor those which do not.

Reasons given by students for choosing a junior college (see Table II) and the services which the students indicate they are most interested in receiving show an interesting relationship. Although it is usually considered that the relative inexpensiveness of the junior college is an important reason that many students attend, the response would seem to show that a much more important reason for their choice is that the college is close to home. If this is combined with the number of students who indicate that they think they can succeed at the junior college, there is a strong suggestion that these students do not feel very secure in higher education. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that a fairly large number of students reveal that they are interested in receiving help in study skills and reading skills. (It is doubtful that students would distinguish between these two skills as finely as educators do; these two responses probably should be combined.)

Also noteworthy is the fact that a relatively small percentage of students choose their junior colleges because of a strong program in their intended major. In fact, most of them indicate that they want help from the college in the area of career information. This reinforces the speculation that few entering junior college students have the information and understanding about themselves and the world to make choices about their future.

According to the information from the questionnaire, black students attend the community junior colleges in Florida in smaller numbers than are hoped for; more men than women are in the colleges; most students are 19 years old or younger when they enter; and almost all of them are high school graduates. More than 80 percent are full-time students, although an average of 22.5 percent receive no

TABLE II

PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPORTING ON VARIOUS REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE JUNIOR COLLEGE IN TEN FLORIDA COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

College	Inexpensive	Close to Home	Program in Major	Can Succeed
A	24.1	33.7	8.1	7.6
B	15.0	33.7	4.7	10.3
C	2.5	35.1	23.2	6.9
D	23.7	31.5	5.9	10.3
E	10.8	30.6	4.3	10.6
F	19.2	26.8	10.4	10.7
G	28.0	28.5	5.7	8.9
H	10.9	49.1	3.0	5.5
I	14.4	19.8	10.8	13.8
J	19.5	16.8	8.5	12.2

TABLE III

PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPORTING ON THE COLLEGE SERVICES OF MOST INTEREST IN TEN FLORIDA COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

College	Career Information	Study Skills	Reading Skills
A	56.6	18.9	3.9
B	58.4	15.8	4.5
C	60.8	23.9	2.3
D	58.8	19.9	3.8
E	41.8	17.0	8.8
F	58.7	20.8	5.1
G	54.6	20.6	5.1
H	61.8	15.2	4.2
I	57.0	15.7	3.8
J	58.3	14.5	3.6

SOURCE: Board of Regents of the State University System of Florida. *Survey of Characteristics of College Students. Entering Freshmen and Transfer Students. Junior College Questionnaire.* 1969-1970.

financial help from their families. It is questionable whether the colleges offer the services which the students themselves are asking for, however. The over-all holding power of the colleges is not as high as the colleges would like it to be. Only a small percentage of entering students stay to graduate. Many of the students who registered so hopefully in transfer programs when they first entered the college must be those who dropped out because Table IV shows that the total on-campus enrollment of students in terminal or technical programs (into which students might have been guided to complete training and education) is relatively low: a high of 28 percent at one college, a low of 6 percent at another, for an average of 21 percent.

Characteristics of Disadvantaged Students

These students at the lower end of the range of the socioeconomic structure of the community and the academic ability of students can be regarded as disadvantaged. They are *low-ability* or *low-achieving* and *high-risk students*, and they are the students who account for the high failure rates and high drop out rates. It is important to inquire into their characteristics.

They are deprived of certain skills and values of the middle class which are necessary for success in the established middle-class school of the United States: (1) the importance of education; (2) respect for community authority; (3) postponement of immediate satisfaction for ultimate gain; (4) appreciation of the community standards of art, music, drama, etc. (25) Even when the first generation college students and their families have internalized the values and goals of education, they do not have the behavioral mechanisms requisite for attaining them. The parents are not able to provide the environment and encouragement that is necessary for school success. (21) They lack middle-class values and skills largely because they

TABLE IV

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TERMINAL COURSES
IN TEN FLORIDA COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGES

College	Percent of Students in Terminal Courses
A	19.0
B	28.0
C	26.0
D	19.0
E	33.0
F	21.0
G	18.0
H	6.0
I	18.0
J	24.0

SOURCE: Department of Education. Division of Community Colleges. Tallahassee, Florida. Fall Term, 1969-1970.

NOTE: Includes all students from the total on-campus college grade enrollment who are enrolled in a terminal or technical program which has a curriculum of at least one year but less than four.

are poor; and this poverty includes a poverty of growth, cognitive and intellectual, as well as physical; poverty of motivation and self-direction; poverty of human values. (22) Perhaps the most serious aspect of poverty is the feeling of powerlessness it engenders. The poor have no control over life or society; the purposes of life are not their own. They find their environment merely random or immovable. (11)

In the established middle-class school, verbal ability of a high order is essential to academic success. Without this language ability, students are severely handicapped in educational situations, for language is essential for the transmission of knowledge from one person to another and for the performance of certain operations with concepts. The language with which teaching is carried out must be learned so that the student may learn *how to be taught*. It is this language which the disadvantaged students so frequently lacks, although his language may be ample and even highly effective in the other aspects of his life. (3)

An important factor in the learning process is the way the learner sees himself. If he sees himself as a learner, if, for example, he perceives himself as a person who can read, who can speak well, who can learn, he will be more able to achieve success. (12) A disadvantaged student frequently has a very low opinion of himself as a learner, either because past failures have convinced him that he is doomed to be a permanent failure, or because he has been regarded in the past as inferior and incapable. Learning abilities (those processes by which individuals acquire new learning) must themselves be learned. All human abilities are learned, and the learning of certain abilities makes possible the learning of other abilities. Of these abilities, the language skills--listening, speaking, reading,

and writing--are perhaps the most basic for academic success. The inability to handle these communication skills is a serious handicap to students of average and below-average ability.

Remediation and/or Compensation

The community junior colleges in Florida have recognized that the open-door policy places upon them the responsibility to give special aid and assistance to those low-achieving students who present themselves as students. Nine of the colleges surveyed for this study offer remedial or compensatory programs, or both. The tenth college makes special provisions for low achieving students in a learning laboratory.

The remedial programs have long been a part of the American school curriculum. In a system of mass education, there are always some students who do not for one reason or another profit adequately from their first teaching and learning. For these students remedial programs are provided whose goal is to remove deficiencies so that the students may enter a program for which they were not previously eligible. Remedial teaching has been defined as special instruction intended to overcome in part or in whole any particular deficiency of a student not due to inferior general ability. It refers to two types of activities: *remedying defects*, by eliminating ineffective habits and unwholesome attitudes and reteaching skills which have been incorrectly learned; and *developing increased competence*, by teaching for the first time habits, skills, and attitudes which have never been learned but should have been and which are needed by students. (15)

Corrective teaching and *remedial* teaching are distinguished by Bossone. Corrective teaching is the type of instruction given within the framework of the regular classroom (either to the entire group or smaller subgroups) and is administered when the gap between achievement and expectation is not great; it is given for the purpose of remedying deficiencies in skills that are interfering with adequate achievement. Remedial teaching is the type of instruction given to an individual or a small group apart from the classroom for disabled learners who need more intensive and highly individualized attention. (7)

Existing programs in most community colleges are remedial programs, centered on institutional requirements, not on student needs. Group remedial instruction serves as an excuse for a lack of a well-defined and worked-out program to fit student needs. The courses commonly given are reading, English, and mathematics. The purpose of these courses is to improve the students "capacity to do college level work--" to go on into the regular college transfer courses.

A compensatory program, on the other hand, attempts to "compensate, to make up for or to overcome the effects of hostile, insufficient, different, and/or indifferent conditions of prior experience and stimulation." (16) They are usually programs of general education with the addition of special training in skills. The Florida State Department of Education has proposed a definition of compensatory education programs:

> A compensatory education program consists of a group of interdependent activities and special types of educational experiences designed to meet the specific academic and personal needs of educationally disadvantaged students whose needs for such programs of special instruction results from poverty, neglect, delinquency, curriculum deficiencies, cultural attitudes, cultural or linguistic isolation from the community at large. A compensatory education program must include attention to subject matter remediation, development of competencies, and change of attitudes...

If Bellack's goals of general education are accepted: to make available to students the intellectual and aesthetic resources of their culture in such a way that these resources become guides for intelligent action and help students create meaning and order out of the world in which they find themselves, these goals must be recognized as important for disadvantaged youth. (2) It is important that the needs of the student take precedence over the needs of the system: the student's needs for basic skills; for personal enrichment (a minimum body of knowledge necessary for participation in American life); and for an adjustment to himself and society (an image which allows him to relate to himself, to others, and to an occupation, and to develop a rational procedure for obtaining his objectives). (27)

The compensatory program does not attempt to change the student to fit the educational system; it is not concerned with institutional needs. The purpose of a compensatory program is to adjust the educational program to fit the needs and requirements of the student: the improvement of basic skills, the mastery of the facts and concepts which are the intellectual content of education, the necessary preparation for further vocational or occupational training, and the development of a positive self-concept and attitude toward his environment.

Report of the Survey

Written English composition courses in remedial programs for disadvantaged students in ten public community junior colleges in Florida were examined for this study. A letter was sent to the Deans of Instruction or the Deans of Academic Affairs (or their equivalents) at each college, enclosing a copy of the questionnaire for the survey and requesting their cooperation in the survey. The letter also

requested an appointment for the investigator to visit the college to meet with the chairman and members of the staff of the department concerned with remedial English programs, at which time the questionnaire would be completed. At every college the cooperation of administration and staff was cordial and generous. Unfortunately, all the visits had to be made on Fridays (because of the teaching commitments of the investigator during the rest of the week) and, therefore, it was not possible to visit classes or talk with students in many of the colleges. The visits were made during the months of February and March 1970.

The administration and faculty of all the colleges visited gave ample time to answer those questions for which information was available. The meetings lasted from three to five hours, during which time classrooms and laboratories were also visited, materials and equipment examined, and a great deal of information beyond the items of the questionnaire exchanged. Both administration and faculty of the colleges expressed strong interest in the remedial programs in other colleges throughout the State. All of them expressed some feelings of dissatisfaction with their own programs and a hope that, with some knowledge of the success and failure of directions, methods, and developments of other programs, their own could be improved.

Six of the colleges have separate Guided Studies or Directed Studies Departments through which all remedial teaching is handled. The others handle the remedial work through the departments of the disciplines concerned. All of the colleges offer remedial courses or assistance in reading, English and mathematics.

Seven of the colleges have separate basic, remedial courses in English composition; two of the colleges offer a combined course of freshman English and

remediation, for which the student gets full English credit if he completes it satisfactorily; one college offers both a separate course and a combined course. These courses are regarded as "remedial" and/or "compensatory" by the colleges, none of which seem to distinguish the two terms.

Six colleges reported that attendance is required by those students considered to need the courses, and a seventh college applies "gentle coercion" with success. The others strongly recommend to students considered to need the work that they attend, but the final choice is made by the student.

The Florida Twelfth Grade Placement Test is used by all the colleges to place students--a score of 125 or 150 is the cut-off point by those colleges requiring attendance. Other tests are also given, SCAT being the most widely reported, for those who have not had the FTGPT or to give the counselors additional information about the students.

The goals of the English programs in all the colleges are within the traditional pattern or reading and writing, with particular emphasis on writing--composition stimulated by reading, as stated by the *Official Report of the Task Force in English.*[1]

The remedial composition courses are all designed to enable the student to go on to regular English courses in the college, particularly the transfer English course. Writing skills--punctuation and mechanics, spelling, sentence structure

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[1] *Official Report of the Task Force in English* to the Professional Committee for Relating Public Secondary and Higher Education, Florida State Board of Education, Tallahassee, July 1969.

(as stated by the *Task Force* also) and paragraph writing are stressed. Although several colleges state their goals in terms of performance, only one has set out clear behavioral objectives.

Grammar and sentence structure, usage and punctuation, spelling, and composition make up the remedial English courses in all the colleges. Four colleges teach traditional grammar and two teach structural or descriptive grammar, according to their questionnaires. The course outline of a seventh college indicates that traditional grammar is taught there. Five teach punctuation and usage by class instruction; another requires all students to complete a program on punctuation. Four colleges give class instruction in spelling and two give personal instruction as it is needed.

Expository writing is emphasized by all of the colleges, with various types of paragraphs--comparison, contrast, argument, etc.--being taught. One college has students write every class period; four others report that their students write at least once a week. One combined freshman English course requires a minimum of seven pieces of writing.

Careful reading of compositions is reported by all colleges. Only one department reported that grades are not given; the others do assign grades variously for the organization of the paragraph, sentence structure, and mechanics. The college reporting behavioral objectives uses these as a basis for grading.

Classroom group instruction only was reported by one college, and laboratory work only by another. The others reported different combinations of group instruction, individual instruction, and laboratory work. All reported the use of some materials other than printed by both teachers and students. Eight colleges use

specific, assigned texts. One is a programmed text. Programs and workbooks are used in those courses giving individual instruction or having laboratories. All of the colleges report some production of materials by instructors--mostly duplicated handouts.

Regular *A* to *F* grades are given by five colleges; *A* to *C* with various methods of avoiding failing grades (*NC*, *W* or *X*) are given by four others. One college gives *S* (satisfactory) and *N* (audit). Only one college gives no credit at all for Guided Studies courses. Others give institutional credit and two give elective credit.

Teachers are either especially recruited for the program or are volunteers from the English department in all but two of the colleges. Classes are small--not more than 20 students. Most of the colleges report that their counseling services are inadequate because they have too few counselors. Group counseling is used only in the guise of special orientation courses.

Overtly at least, the administrations of the colleges support the remedial programs, although several departments feel that the problems involved are not well understood by administrative staffs. All reported varying support by the faculties, from full, genuine support to a rejection of remediation as a legitimate collegiate activity.

A serious weakness recognized by all of the colleges is the inadequate evaluation of their programs. Only two of them were able to furnish the information requested in the questionnaire relating to student performance. Two colleges reported that studies are currently underway to investigate the performance of students who have completed the Guided Studies Program. All of them expressed the hope that they would be able to institute such studies, although the general lament was lack of funds, facility, and staff for such studies.

Because the purposes and goals of all the programs are defined in terms of institutional needs, there are several figures which are of interest to the administrators of remedial programs and to the college administrators as well. (1) How many students complete the programs successfully? (2) How many continue into the regular English programs? (3) How many pass the regular English program? That is, how many receive a grade of *D* or better? (4) How many receive a grade of *C* or better? In California it was found that 70 percent of the students entering all community junior colleges failed to qualify for the freshman English transfer course. Of those who entered the remedial classes 10 to 33 percent dropped out before the end of the term, and about 70 percent did *not* go on to the freshman course. Of those who did go on, about 50 percent did not complete the course. (14) In terms of the institutional goals set for the remedial courses, the courses were not successful.

One of the Florida colleges reported on the former Guided Studies English students in the fall of 1968-1969: 29.49 percent of them took College English, of those 69.6 percent passed with a *D* or better. However, of the grades given to them, 56.3 percent were *D*'s--which cannot always be transferred to senior institutions. Another Florida college reported that 52.8 percent of the students entering the remedial course completed it satisfactorily, and that of these 47 percent continued into the regular college course. Of those who continued, 2 percent received *B*'s, 76 percent *C*'s and 22 percent *D*'s.

The studies which are being completed by the other Florida colleges will be of great interest to all. It is questionable whether the remedial courses as they are presently organized can be considered worthwhile to the institutions who are

allotting large amounts of their budgets to these programs and who find so few students continuing in the colleges after completing these courses.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WRITTEN ENGLISH COMPOSITIONS COURSES IN REMEDIAL PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS IN FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Goals and Purposes

The institutions of higher education in the United States dominate the academic scene. Society is committed to the premise that a college education is necessary for everyone, and the influence of this committment is felt down into the early levels of education. In junior high schools youngsters are urged to prepare for their college education. As they pass along into high school, the pressure is increased. Most higher education itself is involved in a giant credentialing process, each step controlled by and dictated to from the level above or some force beyond. (32) An impoverishment of the undergraduate experience has been the result of this process in which the major programs of the various disciplines dominate the first two years, dictating the course of study. The junior college programs have been so controlled by the dictates of the senior institutions that the innovation which it was hoped would be attempted by them has not been realized. Bound by their absolute dedication to the transfer program, the junior colleges have fallen into the role of "junior universities" and have failed to develop the general education and occupational programs much needed by a majority of their students.

The open door policy and the growth of the so-called *junior college philosophy* which seeks to save students from failure, has produced a somewhat schizoid condition

in most community colleges which strive to maintain their academic position *vis-a vis* senior institutions and at the same time find large numbers of students at their open doors seeking both general education and training. Many of these students are not prepared for college level work--a level both undefined and perhaps undefinable. But the colleges have found that there are tests by which they can ascertain that these students do not have the basic skills required for college courses, especially freshman English and freshman mathematics. And so the inevitable remedial courses were organized, seeking to repair student deficiencies and prepare them for the college level courses.

The remedial programs in English, for example, usually state explicitly that the objective is to prepare the student for freshman English. If that objective is not so stated, it is nevertheless clear that the objectives which are outlined for the remedial course are also those of the freshman English course. Many educators question whether the freshman English course itself is of any value, but it is certainly even more questionable whether it is of value to the low-achieving students in the community colleges or to others of average ability or above whose interests are not academic. In 1953 the Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English estimated that Americans, engaging in communication behaviors, spent 45 percent of their time listening, 30 percent speaking, 16 percent reading, and 9 percent writing. (24) The *Task Force in English* recommended programs for freshman English consisting of writing stimulated by reading, although only 25 percent of the time of most Americans is spent in those activities and 75 percent is spent in the listening and speaking which are totally ignored by most college programs, and for which most students need training and practice.

The improvement of basic skills is usually given as the purpose of remedial English. But few remedial courses, being in the shadow of freshman English, have set out realistic and sensible outlines of what those basic skills are. In setting out the basic skills, the needs of the student, both present and future (carefully estimated), should be the first consideration. In addition, student abilities must be weighed. And finally, a realistic assessment of the possibilities of successful attainment must be made. With these three factors in mind, student need, student ability, and possibility of success, the following statement made by a high school English department in California might well be given serious thought and careful consideration:

THE BASIC SKILLS

1. If a student has an idea about some subject, he must be able to express that idea in writing, and defend it. In doing this he must write or type legibly with no more than five misspellings in each one hundred words, and with some logical form of organization.

2. He must be able to express his ideas orally in a voice loud enough to be heard by those who are listening.

3. Given material written at the seventh-grade level, he must be able to understand the literal meaning of 95 percent of what he reads.

4. In written or televised commercials, he should be able to identify basic propaganda techniques.

5. He must be able to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion.

6. He must be able to follow accurately a detailed set of instructions.(26)

Armed with these skills, students would be able to cope quite adequately with any language situation in which they found themselves, including freshman English. To assist students in the attainment of these basic skills, the junior colleges would

adapt to their particular students and their needs. The Florida Twelfth Grade Placement Test gives a reading score for each student. Those who have not attained the seventh-grade level should be required to take reading instruction; others, especially those who might be identified as serious transfer students, should be encouraged to develop their reading skills to the highest possible level. The reading programs may be set up in any of a number of ways: the most important consideration must be to enable the student to work individually and independently on his own weaknesses and at his own rate. Learning laboratories are successfully used by many colleges; classrooms utilizing laboratory-type methods are also successful. For the slow reader, counseling may be necessary, for the consequences of poor reading during the student's whole, previous academic history will have been unfortunate and may have created emotional problems. Reading may be offered in a separately organized department or within the English department--both methods have been efficiently used.

It is important to make certain that these skills really do provide the student with the abilities he needs both now and in his predictable future. Few students are required to do much writing outside of English classes. Mass education has made necessary the objective test with the machine-scored answer sheet. Large classes make it impossible for teachers to read many student papers. At the most, the student may be expected to write a short paragraph in answer to a rare essay-type question or to summarize reading. The skill as outlined above, to express an idea in legible writing with no more than five misspelled words in each one hundred and with some logical form, should serve him for all normal demands of his college career. Certainly when he leaves college that writing skill will be

sufficient for most average situations. (English departments are busy training English majors, who do need to have more highly developed writing ability; the departments should assume this training when the students come to them as majors, if the students do not already possess the skill. Those who choose English as a major, however, usually have the skills of reading and writing developed to a high degree before they enter college.)

In virtually every course he takes, a student must be able to express his ideas orally in a voice loud enough to be heard by those who are listening and with some logical form of organization. Class participation is important in mass education, for the very reason that the teacher is not able to read large numbers of individual papers. The ability to express his ideas orally is also important to the student as a worker and as a citizen; he may take part in and influence the making of decisions in his company or organization, in his professional group, his labor union, the PTA, or his political party--in the many organizations in which he expresses himself socially and culturally.

The next two skills listed: to be able to identify propaganda techniques and to distinguish between fact and opinion, are of immeasurable value to every human both as an individual and as a member of a group. To protect himself as a consumer, to safeguard his political and civil rights, to maintain a free atmosphere in his community and nation, each person must be aware of the manipulation by language to which he is constantly subjected and to be able to save himself to some degree from being used by teachers, administrators, government representatives, the media, the advertising profession, and others.

The ability to follow accurately a detailed set of written instructions is an important prerequisite for successful performance in college and on any job, as well as in many other situations from playing games to operating a machine or appliance.

These skills are basic; they are the skills which every person living in the complicated technological society of the contemporary United States must be able to exercise to some degree. The level of attainment necessary for each individual in each skill may vary, and competence beyond the generally accepted minimum should be developed in on-the-job training, in-service training, graduate and/or professional schools. But every student is capable of successfully mastering a level which his needs and interests require. These skills also form a solid base upon which more highly developed abilities may be built.

Remediation or Compensation?

With the extension of mass education to the junior college level, both remedial and compensatory/developmental programs will probably be necessary in the community junior college for some time. Many students will enter the colleges with the basic skills below an acceptable minimum level. They will need assistance in improving their skills to the level they need and desire. Many of them will be found to be only a very little below accepted minimum standards, others will need massive development. Great progress has been made in the development of testing programs to aid teachers and counselors in arranging programs for students. And the colleges themselves need to take an active part in the development of testing programs. A cooperative effort to develop tests or to develop local norms for standard tests would be of great value to the community junior colleges of Florida. Competent

evaluation of student performance and of programs offered would also assist in both the development of programs of remediation and compensation and in providing a sound basis for counseling. Without this information, the college programs can only be of a hit-or-miss quality.

The reduction of the ratio of students to counselors is also of primary importance. The colleges must find ways to encourage the education and training of more counselors, by supporting programs in the universities, by offering scholarships and fellowships, and by providing in-service training, as well as by improving the efficiency of counselors through the reduction of paper work, the provision of aides, and any other feasible means. The open-door policy is bringing an increasing number of students in need of counseling to the junior colleges. Research into group counseling and advising should be supported by the colleges to extend the services of their trained people and to utilize the strong motivational factors inherent in group effort.

Except for those students who show some major language difficulties, all students should be placed in the regular English course required for graduation. Hopefully these courses will have objectives which are both reasonable and useful for the ordinary student, perhaps similar to those outlined in the first section of this chapter. Also hopefully, the objectives will be set out in behaviors which can be measured by the classroom teachers. Students will then be given every possible assistance to complete the goals. For the slower learners, additional time in a learning laboratory or extra class sessions must be provided. As the desired behavior will be carefully described, the student will be given credit for the course when he has mastered minimum levels of the skills and can demonstrate his mastery

by performance. If more than one term is needed by some of the slower learners, they should be given the extra time with no grade penalty.

Students with more serious problems will need a more comprehensive program to overcome the effects of their poor prior experience. A program of general education following the guidelines set out by the Florida Department of Education will be necessary for these students, a program especially designed to fit the needs of the students of the community. Such a program will include the improvement of basic skills, particularly skills of language and mathematics; the mastery of the facts and concepts which are the intellectual content of education; the necessary preparations for further vocational or occupational training; and the development of a positive self-concept and attitude toward the world. A one-year general educational curriculum would probably be the minimum program to achieve these ends.

Suggested Objectives for a Written English Composition Course in a Remedial Program

The objective of the written English composition course in a remedial/ compensatory program should be the development of basic language skills. The student must be able to demonstrate the mastery of these skills by his performance.

1. The student must be able to express his ideas orally in a voice loud enough to be heard by those who are listening, and with some logical form of organization.

2. The student must also be able to express his ideas in legible writing or typing, with some logical form of organization, and with no more than five misspellings in each one hundred words.

3. The student must be able to distinguish verbally between statements of fact and statements of opinion.

4. The student must be able to identify verbally basic propaganda techniques as employed in written, spoken, or televised commercials; in written, spoken, or televised news reports, and in political speeches.

5. The student must be able to follow accurately a detailed set of written instructions.

Mastery of the first two objectives should be measured by the student's performance. Near the end of the term, each student should be required to speak several times (perhaps a minimum of two would suffice) to his class. If a good group *esprit* has been developed in the class, the whole class may participate in the evaluation of the performance; in addition, the class may invite other members of the department to take part. The two basic criteria for evaluation should be the organization of the ideas and the clarity of verbal expression.

Also in the last week or two of the term, the student should be required to write three to five paragraphs. The department may wish to specify that they be of 300 to 500 words in length, to enable the students to demonstrate adequately their ability to express their ideas. The criteria for evaluation should be the organization of the ideas with some logical form, legibility, and no more than five misspellings in each one hundred words. The students should be evaluated on the best of the paragraphs: they should not be forced to have their work for the whole term be judged on the basis of only one piece of writing. As with the speaking, the students might well evaluate each other's work, if time and organization permit;

in addition, other members of the faculty may be asked to read the paragraphs of the students who are being considered for recommendation to the English course.

The mastery of the third and fourth objectives--the ability to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion, and the ability to identify basic propaganda techniques--may be demonstrated either orally or in writing. The students may use either of these points as the subjects for talks to the class or for written exercises. An oral presentation could be especially effective, asking the speaker to field questions from other members of the class following his presentation. The examples chosen for written demonstration should be kept very simple, so that there is no possibility for the instructor to confuse the student's comprehension of propaganda techniques and his ability to distinguish fact from opinion with his mastery of the mechanics of writing.

The students could well profit by having the measurement of their ability to follow directions based on a useful experience. Detailed written instructions for carrying out a library assignment, for example, would be valuable for them. Or they may be encouraged to learn to do something which they have long wanted to do, in which case the instructor may call upon persons outside the department to assist in drawing up the instructions. Careful attention must be paid to the method by which the exercise is reported. If the student is to present written evidence of his performance, the evaluation should be made strictly on the performance and not on the mechanics of the report.

Content for the Written English Composition Course in Remedial Programs

The objectives of the written English composition course, as outlined, are to improve the students' facility to speak and write. The students' *skills* are to be

developed; the composition course is a *how-to* course. For such a course, the content could be any subject matter about which the students could speak and write. In most English departments the subject matter chosen is literature. In fact, most English departments in colleges and universities would more properly be called departments of literature; even the English departments in high schools devote the majority of instructional time to the teaching of literature. It is indeed odd that what is taught about language to the speakers of that language is confined to skills and how-to techniques, and little about the language itself. Language is the most typically human of all human behavior, and is the fullest expression of the culture from which it comes. (1) Most people who are introduced to the study of the nature of language find it fascinating and absorbing. Furthermore, it is a subject which it is important for people to understand as well as to know about.

Language study, is, therefore, recommended as a part of the course content of the remedial English program. Language study encompasses a much larger area than grammar, although grammar may be included. What language is, its structure and internal relationships, the system of language as distinguished from the performance of language, are essential information for the understanding of human communication. (20) The history of language, specifically the history of English, how languages are learned, how the same language may differ from place to place, from time to time, from group to group, how language influences thought and expression of thought: these topics are not only legitimate but important subjects of the English composition courses.

Various kinds of organization of materials concerning language have been suggested: language as a system, a description of English grammar, and a

description of English usage is one. (18) These areas are to be considered from a descriptive point of view, designed to help the student understand what grammar and usage are and how they developed the way they did; not from a prescriptive point of view. It is to be hoped that with the dissemination of the knowledge which has come out of linguistic study, research on how language is learned, and learning theory, most junior college English instructors would give up the notion that a knowledge of grammar (of any kind) would improve the writing ability of students. In spite of daily evidence to the contrary, however, many remedial courses continue to teach grammar. The NCTE Task Force on Teaching English to the Disadvantaged noted that schools with the ablest and most advantaged students have discarded formal grammar, while schools with slower and disadvantaged students have clung tenaciously to dreary and even harmful grammar instruction. (23) The aim of language study in the remedial program is to increase the students' understanding and appreciation of the function of language in communication, culture, learning, and all the myriad of human activities which depend on language.

A second source of course content for the remedial composition program is a branch of language study which can be regarded as a separate area: semantics. This is the study of the relationships of words to objects, behavior, human experience, and to each other. It is most importantly a study of meanings. Vocabulary study has long been considered an important part of remedial language teaching, but it usually degenerates into a routine learning of words--pronunciation, definitions, and spelling. Semantics goes beyond those elemental activities to explore the meanings of words, not only lexical and grammatical, but also emotional meanings. To be able to identify basic propaganda techniques, it is necessary not

only to understand the multilevel meanings of words but to have some appreciation of the sign and symbol systems which influence human thought and behavior.

A knowledge of cognitive processes provides a third source of content for the composition program. Very few students, and most especially low-achieving students, have any idea how they arrive at conceptions, ideas, opinions; at how they reach decisions, either as individuals or as part of a group. If students are to develop the ability to distinguish between statement of fact and statement of opinion, it would be helpful for them to know how they get their opinions. It is not supposed that remedial English teachers are also professional psychologists, but it must be assumed that they are sensible, rational beings, whose education enables them to examine thought processes. Various approaches to the understanding of cognitive processes may be employed. Dewey's analysis of the way people think is well within the grasp of the junior college student.[1] Various descriptions of problem solving, of scientific investigation, are clear and understandable. Learning by discovery is a method which students cannot only employ but also comprehend. Although it might be advisable to discard some of the jargon, the cognitive learning theory principle of subsumption is also within the ken of the students: they will be able to perceive that new material which they learn is converted into an extension, elaboration, or qualification of something they already know (correlative subsumption); or that it is an example of what they already know or supports an opinion they already hold (derivative subsumption).

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[1]John Dewey. *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. New York, D.C. Heath & Co., 1933

Of special importance today, in view of the rapidity and extent of social change, is an understanding of the way values, particularly group values, are arrived at. Students could well study and practice the methodology of practical judgment as outlined by Hines[1] and others and proposed as a way of teaching techniques for resolving issues which involve conflicting values. (19) This might serve as an extension of group counseling which is a particularly valuable motivational device for under-achieving students.

The final source of content for the remedial English composition course is the study of verbal logic. The logic required is not of the formal or symbolic type, but the simple variety which helps the student to set up a proposition and establish a defense for it, to state an opinion and give arguments to support it. (28)

The four sources of content for the composition program are closely interrelated: language study, semantics, cognitive processes, and verbal logic. By studying them, the students will consider the various aspects of the central process of composition: thinking converted to speaking and writing.

Instructional Theory for Written English Composition

Courses in Remedial Programs

Instructional theory, to be useful, should seek to combine into an effective working arrangement the three components of the instructional situation: the learner, the subject matter or content to be studied, and the major precepts of learning theory. The readiness of the learner for the learning task is one of the most important factors of the situation: the teacher should know as much as possible

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[1]Vynce A. Hines, "Community Disintegration, Education, and a Methodology of Practical Judgment--Some Needed Educational Research." Mimeographed. Gainesville, Florida, University of Florida, n.d.

about the learner's existing capacity to perform the learning objectives. For this reason testing programs and other measures of assessment are of great interest to the teacher. Not only the ability, achievement level, and experience of the student should be known, but also his special interests, his motivation, his health, and many other factors should be known which may effect or affect learning. The bromide is often mouthed by the junior colleges that they accept the student where they find him and take him as far as he can go. But unfortunately, very often the teachers do not know where the student is.

Another factor which greatly affects learning is the way the learner sees himself, particularly how he sees himself as a learner. This the teacher may discover only very slowly, but he must make an effort to find out as much as possible about the student. The student, too, must be helped to know himself and to see himself as a learner. To have this happen, positive experiences of learning must be provided based on the student's ability. If the course content recommended in this study is followed, the student will be given ample opportunity to see himself working through a problem-solving process or a discovery, for example, and he will be helped *to learn to be a learner*.

The generalizations regarding learning should be related to the remedial written English composition course for the low-achieving learner:

1. Realistic goal-setting by the individual--goals which are neither so low and limited as to elicit little effort, nor so high and difficult as to foreordain failure--leads to more satisfactory improvement than does unrealistic goal-setting. The teacher should help the student set goals for himself within the framework of the objectives of the course, goals which can be extended as the student's achievement

increases. For example, he should be encouraged to attempt a short speech or piece of writing on a simple problem for his first efforts, and only gradually to attempt longer efforts on more complicated topics. Immediate goals which can be achieved fairly quickly (although not necessarily very easily) should be selected.

2. Learning under the control of reward is usually preferable to learning under the control of punishment. Correspondingly, learning motivated by success is preferable to learning motivated by failure. Having set realistic goals, the student must be guided toward success. Often, low-achieving students have had a long history of failure. If they are to learn to be learners, they must have experience at learning successfully. Their talks and writing should be assessed positively. Successful learning can be made an exciting experience, so that the students will soon also learn that it is its own reward. If the student is aware that his talk or writing has interested, informed or entertained his teacher and classmates, he will be more willing to repeat the activities.

3. Mild emotion supplies an important incentive to learning, but emotion that is intense may interfere with learning. Motivation is often weak in low-achieving students; or their anxiety to succeed may short-circuit their control of their behavior. Motivation is a tendency to try for a kind of satisfaction or to avoid dissatisfaction. If the reward is attractive and the student anticipates that his behavior will be followed by that reward, he may be willing to attempt to talk before the class or to write a paragraph. But there must be some clues, from the behavior of the teacher, from the students, or from the environment (including postponed satisfaction) that the probability of achievement and reward will be good.

These clues must be genuine, as must the rewards, or the incentive to learn will not develop. (4)

4. Tolerance for failure is best taught through providing a backlog of success. It is true that eventually a student must learn to cope with some failure, but this is only possible if he is convinced that success is possible. Early in the instructional situation he should be provided with success. The first goals should be accessible enough so that success is virtually assured. Having had a taste of success, the goals may then be raised and failure risked--but only when the experience of success is solid.

5. Information about the nature of a good performance, knowledge of his own mistakes, and knowledge of successful results assist the student in his learning. Success must not seem accidental and random. The student must learn that it is under his control, that he can make it happen. And when it does, he must know what caused it. For this reason the knowledge of cognitive processes is included in the content of the composition course. If the student is provided with the techniques and methods for developing a logical talk or paragraph, and if he is aware of how he and others go through procedures which lead to successful performance, he will then be able to repeat them, under varying circumstances and with different materials, and repeat them successfully.

6. Active participation by learners is preferable to passive reception of the content to be learned. The central objectives of the composition course are the attainment of the skills of speaking and writing. These the student must learn by doing, doing that includes planning first and evaluation afterwards. The content of the course--language study, semantics, cognitive processes, and verbal logic--

should be learned through skills which the student is trying to develop: by discovery through oral discussion and presentation, by organization of concepts into talks and paragraphs, and other ways in which the student participates. There is not much place for the lecture method of teaching in a composition course for low-achieving students.

7. There is no substitute for repetitive practice in the overlearning of skills or in the memorization of unrelated facts which must be automatized. Even in composition courses, some rote learning of facts may be necessary, in spelling, for example, although such learning should be reduced to an absolute and very necessary minimum.

8. In rote learning, learning by wholes is usually more effective than learning by parts.

9. Spaced or distributed recalls are advantageous in fixing material that is to be retained for a long time. If a certain absolute and very necessary minimum of rote learning is found to be necessary, the student must be aided to avoid the extinction which is the inevitable result of most rote learning. In addition to learning by wholes and practicing repetitively, spaced recalls or reviews are necessary. The student must be taught the techniques suggested in seven, eight, and nine above, so that he can remember and recall those things which he has spent time memorizing. A teacher who realizes the labor necessary to assure retention will also make very sure that only very important items are required to be memorized to be given back to him on tests.

10. The concepts to be learned should be presented in varied and specific situations. Then the students should try the concepts in situations different from

those in which they were originally learned. For example, the basic propaganda techniques should be identified, defined, and illustrated in various specific areas and situations--advertising, politics, and other. The students should then practice identifying them in many different circumstances, and perhaps utilizing them for other students to recognize. The situations should be both many and varied so that all aspects of the techniques are revealed.

11. Students learn a great deal from each other. When they have been together a long time, they learn from each other more rapidly than they do from peers who are strange to them. Not enough encouragement is given to students to work together and learn together. Teachers universally seem to believe that only they can teach, a myth which is closely connected to the fallacy that learning depends on teaching. In fact, students working together, in pairs or in small groups, usually maintain a high interest and motivation, set important and attainable goals, help each other toward success, and reward each other for good performance to a greater extent than can be accomplished by a teacher attempting to deal with a group of students as a group. In recent years, group work has come to be seen as a valuable part of education and training because of the mutual support and help gained from the group and because of the capacity for groups to effect changes in attitudes and values.

Learning styles are highly individualistic and vary greatly from student to student. There is no *one* technique which works for all students, and some students will learn by each technique used. Teachers of disadvantaged and low-achieving students should be open to the use of all methods. Some students learn best through the use of visual materials, others through audio ones. Some react

well to printed materials, others do not. A great variety of materials should be available, and students should be encouraged to use them all, to experiment to find those which help them the most. Remembering that 45 percent of most adults' time is spent in listening, to which must be added viewing, all sorts of films, film strips, slides, video-tapes and tapes should be provided. The skill of learning from these media should be regarded as highly as the skill of learning from printed materials; and if the students' critical knowledge and evaluation of these media is developed, their taste will also become more discriminating. Perhaps an educated audience could bring about a general improvement of the commercial media.

Group learning is a valuable asset to the remedial program, but individual learning should also be a part of the program. It is important, however, for the teacher to understand the two elements of individual instruction: (1) the student works to improve his particular weaknesses; and (2) the student works at his own rate, with materials adjusted to his levels and needs and with the assistance of the teacher whenever necessary. All too often, individual study has meant that the students worked quietly at their desks all in the same workbooks while the teacher was free to correct papers. This is not individual study. In areas in which each student's achievement is unique, spelling, handwriting, punctuation are good examples, the teacher must try to establish what help each student needs, select programs, film strips, tapes, or any other materials which are available to improve the weaknesses, and set the student to individual study. But the teacher must be available for explanations and suggestions which may be useful, should check progress to be sure that the materials are really suited to the student and will help him to

strengthen his skills, and to make certain that boredom does not so cloud the learning situation that no improvement is made. (Boredom is an important and sometimes disturbing factor in the use of programmed, packaged, auto-instructional material; if recognized by both the teacher and the student it can frequently be overcome or countered.)

The remedial composition course is based on the assumption that the students already possess a high degree of skill in speech. The students aged 18 or 19 years have had 12 years of schooling. The overwhelming majority of them use speech skillfully (not all of it of an academic nature and perhaps not all approved of by their teachers) through the two skills of listening and speaking. It is recommended, then, that the composition teacher begin with the already well-developed capability which the students have to express their ideas. With some understanding of the cognitive processes and of verbal logic, with some guidance from their peers and the teacher, and with some practice, they will quickly learn to impose order and organization on their expression.

The content of the course may be presented to the students as a group by any means available to the teacher and judged to be the most effective. This may well be followed by group discussion, in which the teacher's principle functions should be to see that the right questions are asked and that the group stays with the subject. It is *not* his responsibility to provide answers. Small group discussion and panel groups might be used as well to provide some variety. The small groups might also work together to impose some order on the answers to a specific question or on some bit of information.

The students will soon find that they will have to make lists of their ideas, and out of these lists rudimentary outlines may develop; but they should discover this themselves. Some students may be ready to speak to their peers without much more preparation. But most of them will not have that confidence. They should record their talks on tape, and be given all the necessary time to listen to themselves, re-record, and revise their efforts. The students should decide themselves when they want the teacher to hear the tape; then they should listen together, student and teacher, and discuss the talk, the teacher giving approval insofar as it is honestly possible and constructive suggestions for improvement. All negative criticism should be kept to a minimum.

These are to be short, informal talks, not polished public orations. The students should be using their natural speech and be encouraged to incorporate newly learned vocabulary so that their expression can be accurate and varied. Practice in speaking should be continued throughout the term and the highest possible level of attainment striven for. As the students become a cohesive and mutually supportive group and the talks are given to the group, they can be depended upon to set high standards and help each other in the attainment of good speaking habits.

After they have had some practice in speaking, the students should begin to write their ideas in short paragraphs. The same preliminary preparation should be made, and the same techniques for imposing order and organization on the ideas as is made for talks will be made for writing. Speaking and writing are not identical skills; it is not possible for students to write exactly as they speak and produce acceptable paragraphs. But writing does come out of speech, and the

student will find that if he can capture in writing a fairly well-organized stream of speech, he has the beginning of a written paragraph. He can then revise his piece of writing, imposing the conventions which have come to be associated with written expression. The first efforts should be evaluated for the logical organization and handwriting. (Students who need help in making their handwriting more legible should work independently on penmanship.) As the students become somewhat proficient in written expression, more attention can be paid to the mechanics of spelling and sentences. The mechanics are not ends in themselves, but aids to clarify and understanding. Clarity should be later added as a criterion for evaluation.

Too much teaching of composition is based on premises which, on close examination, turn out to be myths. (29) Teachers seem to be reluctant to accept the results of research studies; and even more reluctant to take part in additional research. As early as 1906, Hoyt concluded that about the same relation exists between grammar and composition as exists between two totally different subjects, such as grammar and geography, for example. Since that time a considerable amount of research, some good and some poor, has been done and no evidence has been found that the teaching of grammar has any appreciable effect on the improvement of the writing skill. (8)

Freshman English composition teachers and teachers in remedial composition courses cling to the myth that students learn to write by writing as frequently as possible, that every paper must be carefully read and every mistake carefully and even painstakingly corrected. And yet there is a growing body of research that seems to indicate that mere frequency of writing does not bring improvement

in the skill, that it may actually be harmful; and that intensive evaluation is no more effective than moderate evaluation. (5, 6)

There is some evidence that "prewriting," stressing an analysis and direction of ideas and organization of thoughts is of value (30); but there is little evidence that the various kinds of organization stressed in composition courses--argument, comparison, contrast, definition--are, in fact, used by writers in respectable journals and magazines. (14)

In investigating the writing problems of remedial English in the Community Colleges of the City University of New York, Bossone found that writing factors identified by the teachers were: ideas, organization, sentence structure, wording, and punctuation-mechanics-spelling. However, they could reach no agreement as to the relative weight which should be attached to these factors in rating compositions. In actual fact, Bossone found they were rated in the following order: (1) punctuation-mechanics-spelling; (2) sentence structure; (3) wording; (4) organization; and (5) ideas. But even in the first category only one fault was agreed upon by all the teachers and all of them rated it as the most serious: the sentence fragment. (7)

The research on teaching composition indicates first of all that more research should be done, and the teachers in junior colleges, both those teaching remedial composition courses and those teaching freshman English, should take an active part in examining the premises of their teaching. In addition, the question of relevance of both content and method should be carefully considered. An examination of the report on so-called innovative practices in the teaching of English given by the League of Innovation in the Community College reveals a dismal lack

of imagination, creativity, and openmindedness. There are no reports of innovation in course content and little in teaching methods: pattern practice and programmed materials are hardly innovative in 1970. (31)

Evaluation

Not only do the institutions of higher education dominate the academic scene in the United States, but they form what is essentially a closed system of marks, methods, prerequisites, and transfer requirements; and they impose that closed system on all the junior colleges. The transfer program dictates the curriculum in most junior colleges, and traditionalism and departmentalism exert a great influence. The marking system and the credit system set the framework within which all curriculum development takes place.

The marking system is a method for screening and sorting students; it suggests to the students that will be judged rather than taught, by projecting the failures of the instructional system on the students, giving low marks to those who have not been adequately taught and high marks to those who may not even have needed any instruction. (10) In courses like freshman English, the student is often graded on those skills he possessed and what knowledge he had at the time he entered the class. No specific behaviors are listed as performance requirements for the course. No outcomes or objectives are identified as being the desired results of the efforts of the course.

Before the student can be "evaluated," it is necessary to set up the standard by which his behavior is to be assessed. The English departments in most junior colleges seem to be saying that they "know" what college level performance in composition and the study of literature is; that the instructors, themselves graduates

of these college level courses, can judge on the basis of their experience the quality of a student's performance. And so the full scale of grades is given from *A* to *F* not only to students in Freshman English, but also to those in remedial courses. In a few of the junior colleges some doubt seems to have clouded the faith of the teachers: they "know" what college level is for the grades *A* to *C* but they are not quite certain what to do with the below-average performance. So the grade of *X* or *W* or audit is given to indicate that the student has not completed the work of the course satisfactorily. These grades may also indicate that the student is to be given more time to complete the work.

Unless the subject matter of a course is ordered, its constituent parts made apparent, and the behavior and performance from which mastery will be deduced is identified, it is not possible to evaluate a student. If this is done, the college program can be developed on a defined-outcomes basis, and minimum educational achievement can be established. (10) The goals suggested for the remedial English course recommended in this study are examples of minimum educational achievement which might be set out in the curriculum. They are levels of achievement attainable by most community junior college students if the students are given the proper instructional assistance and support. Most of the students would be capable of achieving a high level of proficiency in these language behaviors. Agreement on details for grading for different levels of proficiency, if grades are to be given, should be reached by the members of the staff in group participation. A clear, definite, and specific statement of the desired outcomes of the course must be made, to which every instructor in the department must adhere; this statement must be given to the students so that all know exactly what is required of them for successful fulfillment of the course.

Now most courses are evaluated in terms of institutional needs: remedial courses are initiated to prepare students for freshman courses and evaluated on the basis of how many students complete the freshman courses successfully. By these standards, the courses are generally rather poor. An appropriate method of evaluation might be to judge the course on its intrinsic worth. Does it aim for objectives which are worthy and useful? Does it succeed in helping most students achieve these objectives? In the formal evaluation of each course, the students' opinions should be seriously considered, in addition to those of the faculty and administration. In fact, student opinion ought to constitute a large part of the evidence concerning any course. These opinions should be sought not only through the usual rather superficial questionnaire but also through individual and group counseling.

It is important that the remedial written composition courses be evaluated statistically as well as through the opinions of the various groups in the college. Records of student performance should be kept in order to ascertain whether the opinions expressed are being in fact implemented. Methods and materials should be used long enough to determine whether they are really effective in furthering the learning process and discontinued when it is clear that they are not.

The community junior colleges of Florida are in a favorable position to break the closed system and open the possibility of a realistic and more objective way of evaluating students and programs. The position of the colleges in the system of higher education in Florida makes them the foundation of higher education, the purveyors of general education. Most freshman and sophomore students in Florida are in junior colleges, and the senior institutions of the state system must accept

the general education stamp of the junior college from which the students who receive the Associate of Arts degree transfer. The junior college need only certify that the student has completed the requirements for a general education. The student transfers with the equivalent of a *C* average in any case, no matter what his grade point average in the college may have been. The senior institution cannot look behind the general education stamp, and the junior institution cannot enforce its grade point average. This situation should give great freedom to the curriculum planners of the junior colleges. Until now, most of them have clung to the belief that their courses must be academically acceptable to the universities, and all planning has been done within the dreary, traditional pattern. But when the colleges sense their freedom and gain some courage, true innovation may be possible.

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